



Speech of the

**Hon. John Haggart**

ON

**Transportation.**

18th April, 1901.



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Hon. JOHN HAGGART (South Lanark). Mr Speaker, the House is certainly indebted to the hon. member for the St. Lawrence division of Montreal (Mr. Bickerdike) for having introduced this interesting question. The question of transportation and the improvement of our natural watercourses is an all-important one in the development of this country. I shall follow the lines taken by my hon. friends, and take up first the discussion of the necessary improvement required from Montreal to the ocean. The improvements that are being made in Montreal are not of sufficient extent for the requirements of the trade likely to be developed in that port which we all look upon, in our section of the country, as our ocean port. And I think the improvements which are being made by the harbour board and the hon. the Minister of Public Works, are far behind the requirements of the case. I was on this commission appointed for the purpose of inquiring into what facilities should be provided, and we reported upon three different plans. One of these has been adopted by my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works and the Harbour Commission of Montreal, but the all-important one is to have dockage sufficient for the accommodation of vessels, and inland dockage for the accommodation of all the railways that centre in Montreal, which will give facilities for the erection of warehouses and all the accompaniments necessary in a port of the

importance of Montreal. However, I suppose the Minister of Public Works is doing all he possibly can. I know, from my experience as a minister of the Crown, that you cannot get all what you expect or think you ought to have for the improvements required by your particular department. But let the government remember this, that the all-important question is that of transport. It is that which the people are thinking about, and the building up of Montreal, making accommodations for its shipping and developing and building up the water route from there to the ocean is something for which the country will cheerfully grant the money. When we go down to Lake Superior, I am of the opinion of my hon. friend from St. Lawrence division, that that channel should be at least deep enough to accommodate vessels of a draught of 30 feet. That would necessitate the dredging out of the channel to a depth of nearly 33 feet and the bottom of a prism to the extent, advocated by the hon. member for Montreal. By the present plans, which were spoken of by the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries, that can be done at a minimum cost.

The statement was made by the Minister of Public Works that he had a dredge now that would remove the material that forms that prism at the cost of about 1 cent per yard. If that is so, there is no difficulty in having complete ocean navigation from Montreal to Quebec. The lighting of the

channel is another important question. That has been dealt with by the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries. He complains about the manner of the introduction of the subject by the hon. member for the St. Lawrence division of Montreal. He must remember that that hon. gentleman was not speaking his own sentiments only, that he was giving the evidence that had been gathered in the course of inquiry made by the parties interested, the ship-owners and business men of Montreal, to find out what were the evils, if any, with reference to the lighting of the river from Montreal to the ocean. That evidence was given, as the hon. gentleman stated, by about thirty-five captains called at different times. Their opinion was that given by my hon. friend from the St. Lawrence division, as to the requirements of the channel. He complains particularly about Prince Edward Island, that it was not properly lighted.

There is the evidence also of a number of pilots below Quebec as to the proper lighting of different parts of the St. Lawrence. And the hon. minister (Sir Louis Davies) knows that these men stated, as was remarked by my hon. friend from the St. Lawrence division, that the lights were useless, and that they had to sail by the lights in the private houses in order to avoid getting into difficulty. What object would these pilots have in making a statement of that kind if they were not correct? The hon. minister's department was not on trial. The hon. minister said that if he had the right of cross-questioning these witnesses their evidence would have been different. I should judge so. From the skill I have seen the hon. gentleman exhibit in cross-examining witnesses before the committees of this House, particularly before the Privileges and Elections Committee, I can well believe that if he had been the cross-examiner of the witnesses in this inquiry they would have given opinions in consonance with the views of the hon. minister. Another important question is to have the port of Montreal equipped with all necessary facilities. For we must remember the statement made by the manager of the Grand Trunk Railway at Portland last year, that he was going to make Portland not only the winter port of the Dominion of Canada, but the summer port as well—that he had deserted Montreal altogether, as ships are deserting that port. It is a prime necessity then, for the people of the Dominion of Canada, if they believe, as I believe heartily, that the St. Lawrence

route is the natural outlet for the immense country which extends from the ocean up to Lake Superior, that within a short time—because a few years make or unmake the success of a nation—this route should receive its due development and that in the shortest time possible we should build up that route. For we have in our territory, I believe, the natural route for the immense traffic which has been developed tributary to the upper lakes and thence to the ocean. It is the duty of the government to see to it that every possible means are adopted to build up our facilities, and a necessary part of this is the equipment of the port of Montreal and the improvement and lighting of the channel from that port to the ocean. As to this great question of taking the surplus produce from the territory tributary to the great lakes, including those undeveloped mines and timber regions of which we have possession north of the lakes, to an ocean port and thence to the centres of consumption, one party is in favour of railroad transportation, while another favours waterways. I must give my decided opinion, that for heavy freight there is no railway that ever was constructed, even with the most perfect gradients, that can compete with waterways. Take, for instance, the immense quantity of iron ore that is carried from the Lake Superior mines to Pittsburg, Cleveland and other manufacturing points on or near the lakes—that ore is carried at a rate of less than 1-10 cent per ton per mile. Who ever heard of a railway that could carry freight at such a rate? I remember stating in this House some time ago, when the system of protection was being attacked, and when it was being stated from one end of the country to the other that the consumer in the United States was paying for the protection of the iron industries of the United States, that the time would come, and that shortly, when iron and steel would be produced in the United States and furnished to the consumer at lower prices than it would be possible to import it at from the points of cheapest manufacture in the world. And I prophesied that in a few short years not only would the manufacturers of iron and steel of the United States furnish the people of their own country with cheaper iron and steel than could be got from others, but that they would be entering the markets of Belgium and Great Britain and competing with the producers of similar articles there. This I said in the face of the statement by the free trade economists throughout the world,

that such a thing was impossible. We had Mulhall, the statistician, stating that the centre of consumption of iron in the United States was Philadelphia, and that ores could be taken from Bilbao and deposited in Philadelphia at a rate which it was impossible that the ores of the lacustrine region—Lake Superior and the west—could be laid down there. Now, it is known that the facts are otherwise. The Americans are getting iron and steel cheaper than it is possible for them to import them from any country in the world. They are now entering into competition with all other countries in the production of this article which, more than anything else, shows the wealth and possibilities of a country—the production of iron and steel. Where does the ore come from in the United States? Principally from the Lake Superior region. I state here that in our country north of Lake Superior and through to the height of land, we have as fine mines as are to be found in any portion south of the lake, and that our facilities for smelting may be made as good or better than those of any part of the United States. If we develop the natural resources of our country, we have a prospect greater and grander than have the people to the south of us, particularly in the development of our immense mines. From Lake Superior alone to the different ports of the United States the north shore, fancy last year there were nearly 19,000,000 tons of iron ore transported. The traffic on Lake Superior through the Soo canal last year amounted to 25,000,000 tons, for the eight months ending in November. When a person considers these enormous figures and compares them with the trade of London, Liverpool, Glasgow and other great cities, he is amazed that that little section of country surrounding Lake Superior should develop such an enormous traffic. Passing down the St. Marys river into Lake Erie, there is a traffic of over 40,000,000 tons, up and down, a greater traffic than that of the ports of London and Liverpool combined. The figures are so enormous they stagger one. There is no one who has been up there and made himself acquainted with the facts but must be astounded at the immense commerce that is passing down those lakes.

And I not only find steel people of iron and but that of Bel- ing with ere. This t by the world,

From Chicago to the east coast the minimum cost of the transportation of a bushel of wheat is 4½ cents. The rate today is 5 1-8 or 5 1-4 cents. The difference of an eighth of a cent per bushel secures the whole produce of Nebraska, Kansas and those middle states, diverts it from the gulf through Chicago to the sea-coast. The fraction of a cent builds up one part of another in reference to the shipping of produce across the ocean. If we can diminish the cost of the transportation of a bushel of wheat from Chicago to Liverpool by one cent, we will have the whole traffic of Nebraska, Kansas and all that country along through our ports to Liverpool. Montreal gets a small portion of the traffic from Chicago to Liverpool from the fact that you can lay down wheat in Montreal at about an eighth of a cent per bushel less than you can in New York or other Atlantic ports; but that eighth of a cent is eaten up by extra insurance, and puts us on a par with New York and Philadelphia. But if we could reduce it one cent per bushel, what an immense traffic in grain alone would we receive from that western country.

Now, no country can be great unless it has manufactures, and especially manufactures of iron and steel. We are without the riches in coal which our neighbors to the south of us possess; but we have what I contend is a greater natural wealth in the electrical power which may be developed from the water-falls throughout all this great country to the north. Electricity is fast taking the place of coal in the production of power and in the production of heat; and in this respect nature has given us an advantage compensating us for the lack of the great coal formations which exist in the United States; it has given us what I consider a cheaper and natural source of wealth by giving us inexhaustible means of producing electricity and heat. These great regions to the north of us may not have the agricultural advantages that are possessed by more southern sections of the country; but we have in that northern country what is of more inestimable advantage to us in timber and iron ore. I venture to say that the day will come when an acre of that land up the Gatineau region which is now looked upon in a contemptuous manner, will be of more value to the people of this country than an acre of the best farming land. That day must come and will come, and it is well to keep this fact in mind when we are starting out on our career as a nation. The young men of the

country are full of faith in its future, they are forgetting the past, they have no confidence in the men whose memory is riveted upon the past, even if it is only three or four years distant. It is the present and the future that they look at. What then, is our first duty? It is, in my opinion, the development of the waterways from Lake Superior and Lake Huron, and securing of a cheap means of water transportation from that section of the country to the port of Montreal. I am a firm believer in the project called the *Georgian Bay Canal and the Ottawa Canal*. I have looked into the matter. I have thoroughly studied it, and I believe that what we need is a 20 foot navigation from the *Georgian Bay to Ottawa and Montreal*. It seems to me that the people of Montreal should use every effort to bring about the accomplishment of that canal, for if they can only get a tithe of the traffic that passes through Lake Superior and Lake Huron, if they can only get 8,000,000 or 10,000,000 of the 40,000,000 tons that are carried on the lakes, and if the people of Montreal provide proper facilities to the ocean, which my hon. friend from St. Lawrence division (Mr. Bickerdike) says it is possible to obtain, then I say this canal will make Montreal one of the largest cities on the continent of America; if we have larger cities we will have flourishing manufactures and if we have cheap means of transportation, the whole country from the Atlantic to the Pacific will benefit continuously therefrom.

Now, as to the possibilities of the building of the *Georgian Bay Canal*, I wish to say a few words. My hon. friend from North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) quoted from a General Symons, an American engineer, who made an estimate concerning the construction of the Erie canal about ten years ago. He showed that even if they succeeded in obtaining a 20-foot navigation, which would cost an enormous sum of money, they could only travel through that canal at the rate of three or four miles an hour, and that, therefore, the canal would be of no advantage. He is perfectly right in reference to that. Where you are obliged to travel at a very slow rate of speed, where you cannot use paddle wheels or screws on account of the danger of crumbling down the banks and filling up the prism, you have a trouble and a difficulty that are very serious indeed, and must be considered in estimating the cost of transportation through that canal. *But the case is entirely different in the Georgian Bay and*

*Ottawa Canal*. Indeed there is no canalization on this route. Nature seems to have provided everything we need for the purpose of giving us the navigation of that route. You can go at full speed upon the *Georgian Bay Canal* from one end of it to the other.

What have you for the purpose of going from the *Georgian Bay* into *Lake Nipissing*. You have only 60 feet of a lift, and that can be overcome by three locks of 20 feet each. When you get into *Lake Nipissing* you are at the summit level, then you have over a hundred miles of transportation till you get into the *Mattawa River*. There is a descent of only 140 feet into the *Mattawa River*, and from the *Mattawa River* down to *Montreal* you have a route which is not like any other canal, indeed you cannot call it a canal. Extraordinary to say, except in two or three places, the depth of water is from 25 to 60 feet.

*Lake Nipissing* is a great deal over 25 feet. There is just a portion of it under that near the proposed entrance of the canal into *Trout Lake* or the summit level. Economically, what would be the effect? By this route you save 400 miles to the seaboard. You have no canal at all virtually, simply a few locks to pass which will detain you about an hour or so.

The locks ought to be about 500 feet long and about 60 feet wide. That would accommodate a ship of about 8,000 tons. A vessel could then load at *Chicago*, a pretty large vessel, and go right over to *Liverpool* and from *Liverpool* back again. The argument is made that you cannot get the return cargoes that can be got by vessels sailing from *New York* which is an advantage to the shipper. Wherever you have an export trade, and it is the cheapest from the points of that export trade, the return cargo will go likewise. That is as clear as it possibly can be.

Then, there is another advantage, and it is that no foreign navigation laws can affect us. We can sail from *Duluth* or *Chicago* through our own ports and on to *Liverpool*. We do not need to go to *Buffalo* or any other port. This places Canadian shipping in a better position than American shipping, and my hon. friend knows the difficulties at present in reference to the shipping grain by the *St. Lawrence* route. I have stated it again and again, that one of the great difficulties is the want of enterprise on the part of the people of the country which is especially shown in the lack of adequate banking facilities. You can ship in an American

bottom through American territory to Liverpool a cargo, and you can negotiate a loan at any moment on your cargo. You can do it if you drop it to one-sixteenth of a cent per bushel, but, at Montreal you have not that facility.

Their mode of doing business is better than that which we have in this country. Some time ago, in discussing this question, I fell foul of some of the ship-owners of Montreal. I had no intention of doing anything of the kind. Something must have been attributed to me that I did not say. What I stated was that in shipping from Montreal to Liverpool you want a type of vessel suitable for the traffic with quadruple expansion engines, built for the purpose of carrying freight; with no top masts, or anything of that kind which would require hands to manage, with the fewest possible number in the crew, and consuming the least possible quantity of coal. That was the plan proposed by those parties that are proposing the establishment of a system of transportation from the west to the east by the port of Montreal, shipping from Montreal to Liverpool. There is one thing that confines them to cheap transportation, and it is the competition of New York and Liverpool. If they charged the same rate of comparison for wheat that they do for other material that is carried from Montreal to the old country, they would not get one bushel of wheat to carry over. It is because of the very fact that wheat can be landed in Montreal at one-eighth of a cent per bushel cheaper than it can be landed at New York, New-Hampshire News, or Baltimore, and that, including insurance, it can be carried over for the same rate from Montreal to Liverpool, that they get any to carry at all. The freight which is exported by the port of Montreal in the shape of grain from the western states is regulated entirely by the price it takes to carry it from the places where it originates to the Atlantic ports. You want then better facilities for the transport of grain. You want better facilities in your port of shipment, and you must deepen the channel to the ocean. Perhaps your vessels are good for a great many purposes, and far too good for the purpose that I propose they should be used for, but a different class of vessel than that which you have at present, sailing out of the port of Montreal, is necessary. What are the prospects? Suppose this canal were built and that we would be free to lay down in Montreal iron ore, of which we have an abundance on the north shore of

Lake Superior, as cheaply as in Cleveland, look at the development that would take place in the steel industries of the country. But, more than that, it is in the Imperial interests, because they require raw material in England and the only place that is at present in view for the purpose of getting it is the region that lies between us and the watershed which goes to Hudson's Bay, where, I believe, are the most immense deposits available for commerce that there are in the world. If the steel industries and the iron industries in Great Britain are to maintain their present position as competitors with Belgium and the United States, they must get a supply of ore somewhere, because the Biscay ores that they get at the port of Bilbao are giving out. What effect would this have on the people of this country? You imagine 10,000,000 tons, or one quarter of the lake freight, being shipped from Montreal! This country would receive a development that it is impossible to estimate at the present moment. Now, I have no wish to build up or a port at the expense of another. I have no greater love for Montreal than I have for Quebec, or St. John, or Halifax, I hope it is as has been suggested by the member for Quebec West (Hon. Mr. Dobell,) that the navigation of Quebec may be kept open for the whole year, and that it is possible to so construct vessels that Quebec may be a winter and a summer port. More impossible things have occurred in the history of this country, and it is possible that it may be so. I think it may be so, but for a summer port the people of this country and of this section of the country, and to the west of us, look upon Montreal as the entrepot for our goods and we insist upon establishing communication from there to the ocean. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Hon. Sir Louis Davies,) in answer to the hon. member for St. Lawrence division, Montreal (Mr. Bickerdike,) stated that any expenditure on the St. Lawrence ought to be charged to Montreal.

That government money was expended in making the St. Lawrence available, not for the people of Montreal alone, but for the people of the whole Dominion. I am with the hon. member for St. Lawrence (Mr. Bickerdike.) I state here that the government should lay down a policy for this country under which we should have a national summer port and a national winter port, and the whole energies of the country should be directed towards the development of these two ports, and towards providing them with

facilities for carrying on the trade of the country. The expenditure of small sums of money on the Tay canal, for instance, and on others, might be left aside for a short time while the whole efforts of the country are centred upon the development of our national seaports and waterways.

I admit it is difficult to do this. It is hard to get the representatives of certain portions of the country which derives no benefit from this expenditure to vote large sums of money without their particular districts getting a quid pro quo. I admit that there was a great deal in the argument of the Finance Minister, that it was almost impossible to do this without distributing public expenditure in different sections of the country. But, Sir, there should be some general plan laid down for the purpose of affording the best transportation facilities in order to develop the resources of our country. Let me tell the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister that the amount of money expended on capital account together with the deficits on the Intercolonial Railway, since they came into power, would have almost secured the construction of

the *Georgian Bay Canal*. Including the sums voted on capital account for 1902, the hon. the Prime Minister will hardly credit me when I tell him that it aggregates \$17,000,000 on the Intercolonial Railway since he came into power, and the deficit on the ordinary revenue will be in the neighborhood of \$1,750,000. There is \$18,750,000 more than the people of Canada should have paid, and for what purpose? For practically a useless expenditure upon the Intercolonial Railway. If there had been a proper transportation policy for the development of the natural waterways of the country, the money expended for the purposes I have indicated would have almost secured for us this magnificent undertaking. Ponder upon that. Are these things going to continue or is there to be an end to them? *Let the past be buried. Adopt some national system. Work to the line, and I believe that the system I have proposed for the development of the country is one which will make Canada the greatest nation, commercially and in other respects, on this American continent.*

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